

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 TRSE-00 MC-02 CIAE-00

PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

OMB-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 EAE-00 IGA-02 EB-07 /103 W

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O R 130745Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SENSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1044

INFO DOD

CINCPAC

CINCPACREPHIL

13TH AF CLARK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 9072

FOR HOLBROOKE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, RP

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH DEFENSE SECRETARY ET AL ON MINDANAO
SITUATION, POSSIBLE SOVIET ROLE, PENDING C-130 SALE, AND ALLEGED
U.S. ROLE IN WESTERN COMMAND BUILDUP

1. SUMMARY: I HAD A WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION JUNE 12 WITH
DEFENSE SECRETARY ENRILE, JOINED TOWARD THE END BY PRESIDENT
MARCOS (SEPTEL) AND FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO. TOPICS INCLUDED
THE UNEASY CEASE-FIRE IN MINDANAO, POSSIBLE SOVIET MACHINA-
TIONS WITH LIBYA AND THE MNLF, THE PENDING C-130 SALE, AND
WASHINGTON POST ALLEGATIONS ABOUT U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE BUILD-
UP OF THE WESTERN COMMAND. A STATUS REPORT ON THE C-130 SALE
WOULD BE HELPFUL. END SUMMARY.

2. I STIMULATED ENRILE BY ASKING IF HE THOUGHT THE TIME HAD
COME TO LIFT EMBASSY RESTRICTIONS ON U.S. OFFICIAL TRAVEL TO
AREAS OF MUSLIM INSURGENT CONTENTION IN MINDANAO. ENRILE
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SURPRISED ME SOMEWHAT BY RESPONDING THAT THE SITUATION
REMAINED FLUID IN THOSE AREAS, AND EXCEPT FOR ZAMBOANGA
CITY, HE COULD NOT ADVISE ME TO LIFT OUR RESTRICTIONS.
EVEN WITH RESPECT TO ZAMBOANGA, ENRILE ADDED, HE WOULD
SUGGEST THAT WE NOT PERMIT OUR PERSONNEL TO VENTURE
OUTSIDE THE CITY, AND INDEED HE HAS ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS
THAT NO FOREIGNERS ARE TO BE PERMITTED TO TRAVEL INTO

POTENTIALLY CONTESTED AREAS WITHOUT APPROPRIATE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS. ENRILE EMPHATICALLY AND REPEATEDLY SAID THAT HE IS ANOT AT ALL OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN MINDANAO, THAT "SOONER OR LATER WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO FACE UP TO THAT SITUATION," AND THAT THE PHILIPPINES HAS GOTTEN INVOLVED WITH A VERY STRANGE CROWD INDEED IN THOSE LIBYANS ET AL.

3. I MENTIONED TO ENRILE MY IMPRESSION THAT THE HEAVIEST CONCENTRATION OF MNLF MILITARY CAPABILITY IS AROUND COTABATO WITH PERHAPS 12,000 MUSLIMS UNDER ARMS. ENRILE SAID ACTUALLY THE HEAVIEST CONCENTRATION IS ON JOLO, AND THAT IN COTABATO THERE ARE ABOUT 6,000 MEN UNDER ARMS WITH PERHAPS AN EQUAL NUMBER OF UNARMED SUPPORTERS. I ASKED IF HE EXPECTS HOSTILITIES TO RESUME WITHIN THE NEXT THREE OR FOUR MONTHS. ENRILE DUCKED THE QUESTION, SAYING ONLY THAT IF HE WERE IN CHARGE OF THE MNLF, HE WOULD BE VIGOROUSLY RECRUITING, ARMING AND TRAINING AT THIS JUNCTURE. ENRILE ALSO WAS NONCOMMITTAL AS TO WHETHER THERE IS EVIDENCE OF ARMS CURRENTLY COMING INTO THE PHILIPPINES FOR THE MNLF. I SAID IT IS MY IMPRESSION THAT THE PHIPUPPINE ARMED FORCES REMAIN UNDER STRICT INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO INITIATE MILITARY ACTION AGAINST THE MNLF WHICH IN EFFECT MEANS THAT THE MNLF IS IN A POSITION TO DETERMINE IF, WHERE AND WHEN HOSTILITIES ARE TO BE RESUMED. ENRILE AGREED. I SUGGESTED HOWEVER, THAT IF THE PEACE TOOK HOLD AMONG SUFFICIENT MUSLIMS, THE GOP AND THE PHILIPPINES COULD EMERGE BIG WINNERS INDEED. ENRILE AGREED BUT WITHOUT CONVICTION.

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4. AT THIS POINT ENRILE, WITH ROMULO NODDING ON THE SIDE, ALLUDED DARKLY TO A "CLOSED DOOR" MEETING IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE IN TRIPOLI OF THE SOVIET DCM, LIBYAN FOREIGN MINISTER ALI TURAYKI AND MNLF LEADER NUR MISUARI. PRESIDENT MARCOS (MANILA 8102) AND MRS. MARCOS (MANILA 8971) ALSO HAVE MENTIONED THIS MEETING TO ME, ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY NEITHER THEY NOR ENRILE AND ROMULO HAVE A CLUE AS TO WHAT TRANSPIRED THEREIN. ENRILE EMBROIDERED PREVIOUS ACCOUNTS, HOWEVER, BY NOTING THAT FORMER SENATOR ALONDO (PHONETIC) WHOSE SON, ENRILE SAID, IS IN THE MNLF, HAD BEEN INVITED RECENTLY BY THE SOVIETS TO VISIT MOSCOW CONCURRENT WITH A MEETING THERE OF INTERNATIONAL LIBERATION NOVEMENTS. NEEDLESS TO SAY, ENRILE ADDED, "WE OF COURSE REFUSED TO LET HIM OUT OF THE PHILIPPINES." I ASKED IF THERE IS ANY EVIDENCE OF AN OPERATIONAL LINK-UP BETWEEN THE MNLF AND

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 9072

FOR HOLBROOKE

AND THE NPA. ENRILE REPLIED NOT YET AS FAR AS HE KNOWS BUT THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS. IF THE USSR DECIDES TO BACK THE MNLF, ENRILE CONCLUDED WITH A CHARACTERISTICALLY PHILIPPINE COMBINATION OF BROAD SMILE AND EARNEST TONE, "WE SHALL BE COMING TO YOU, FOR WE OF COURSE CAN'T STAND UP AGAINST A SUPER POWER."

5. ENRILE INQUIRED ABOUT PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS FOR THE PENDING C-130 SALE TO THE PHILIPPINES, ADDING "WE COULD USE THE EQUIPMENT NOW YOU KNOW." I REVIEWED THE CASE WITH ENRILE AS I HAD DONE WITH MARCOS MAY 25 (MANILA 8102), ACKNOWLEDGED THAT I AM NOT IMMEDIATELY INFORMED CONCERNING THE CURRENT STATUS, BUT WOULD QUERY WASHINGTON AND ADVISE HIM SOONEST. I ALSO POINTED OUT THAT HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS HAD LOOMED LARGE IN RECENT CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR THE PHILIPPINES, EMPHASIZING THAT IN MY OPINION THE GOP NOW HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MITIGATE FURTHER ADVERSE EFFECTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS
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ISSUES ON PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS BY MOVING VIGOROUSLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO PROMOTE SUCH RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES. ENRILE SEEMED TO TAKE NOTE OF ALL THIS, BUT HE DID NOT

LEAVE ME WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT HE SERIOUSLY EXPECTED MARCOS COULD OR WOULD BECOME A LEADING PRACTITIONER OF HUMAN RIGHTS. COMING BACK TO THE C-130 ISSUE, I TOLD ENRILE THAT I HOPED APPROVAL WOULD BE FORTHCOMING, SINCE C-130S REPRESENT TO MY MIND A RELATIVELY DEFENSIBLE FORM OF ARMS TRANSFER. ENRILE BRIGHTENED UP AT THIS, BUT THEN WORRIEDLY COMMENTED THAT THE GOP SOON WOULD BE COMING FORWARD WITH ITS REQUEST FOR F-8 AIRCRAFT. I OFFERED NO REASSURANCE, INDEED NO COMMENT WHATSOEVER.

6. I DREW ENRILE'S ATTENTION TO THE ARTICLE IN THE WASHINGTON POST JUNE 10 ALLEGING THAT U.S. IS QUIETLY AIDING IN THE BUILDUP OF WESTERN COMMAND HEADQUARTERED AT PUERTO PINCESA ON PALAWAN. ENRILE WAS UNAWARE OF THE ARTICLE AND CONSIDERED THE ALLEGATION RIDICULOUS ON THE FACT OF IT.

7. COMMENT: CLEARLY ENRILE HAS REVERTED TO THE PROFOUND SKEPTICISM THAT HAS CHARACTERIZED HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE CEASEFIRE, OF THE LIBYAN CONNECTION AND OF MRS. MARCOS' DIPLOMATIC INTERVENTIONS, FROM THE BEGINNING WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE BRIEF PERIOD WHEN HE WAS IN CHARGE OF NEGOTIATIONS DURING MARCOS' VISIT TO JAPAN.

8. LESS CLEAR IS WHETHER ENRILE, THE MARCOSES AND ROMULO ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN BEHALF OF THE MNLF, OR IF THEY MERELY ARE INSINUATING THAT POSSIBILITY IN HOPES OF STIMULATING AN AMERICAN KNEE JERK, ANTI-SOVIET REACTION IN THEIR FAVOR.

9. AS REGARDS EMBASSY RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL OF USG PERSONNEL (AND THEIR DEPENDENTS) TO AREAS OF POSSIBLE INSURGENT CONTENTION IN MINDANAO, I BELIEVE WE MUST CONTINUE

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THOSE RESTRICTIONS IN FORCE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ZAMBOANGA CITY AND POSSIBLY A FEW OTHER RELATIVELY CALM AREAS SUCH AS SOUTH COTABATO. I WOULD PREFER NOT TO DISCRIMINATE AS BETWEEN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL IN THIS REGARD, PARTICULARLY SINCE JUSMAG AND DAO HAVE LEGITIMATE CONTACTS TO PURSUE WITH SOUTH WEST COMMAND HEADQUARTERS IN ZAMBOANGA CITY. HOWEVER, I AM GIVEN PAUSE BY THE WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE WITH RESPECT TO OUR VULNERABILITY TO ANY APPEARANCE OF DIRECT U.S. MILITARY COLLABORATION WITH THE PHILIPPINE ARMED FORCES IN THE MINDANAO THEATRE OF OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MNLF. ACCORDINGLY, I WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COMMENT AND GUIDANCE THE DEPARTMENT MAY CARE TO OFFER CONCERNING LIMITING U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL FOR THE TIME BEING TO PRIVATE TRAVEL ON LEAVE AND IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES TO ZAMBOANGA AND SUCH OTHER AREAS AS MAY BE DESIGNATED, WHILE

PERMITTING CIVILIAN PERSONNEL TO MAKE OFFICIAL CALLS AND
CONDUCT BUSINESS AS MAY BE APPROPRIATE.

10. I ALSO WOULD APPRECIATE A CURRENT STATUS REPORT ON
PROGRESS OF AND PROSPECTS FOR, THE C-130 SALE WHICH I CAN
MAKE PROMPTLY AVAILABLE TO ENRILE. IN MJUDGMENT, THIS
SALE OF UNARMED AIRCRAFT MUCH DESIRED BY THE GOP AND IN
EFFECT PREVIOUSLY ASSUMED TO BE AVAILABLE TO THEM, IS MUCH
IN THE U.S. INTEREST. I WOULD PREFER TO GAIN THE ADVANTAGE
AT THIS JUNCTURE OF PROMPT AGREEMENT TO THE C-130 DELIVERY,
AND TO DEFER ANY POSSIBLE SIGNALS OF POLICY INTENT CONCERNING
MILITARY SUPPLY FOR MORE LETHAL AND LESS RATIONAL IMPENDING
ACQUISITIONS SUCH AS, FOR EXAMPLE, F-8 AIRCRAFT.
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TAGS: MASS, PINT, SHUM, RP, US, LY, (ENRILE, JUAN PONCE), (ROMULO, CARLOS P), (MARCOS, FERDINAND)
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